

Teaching Math Vocabulary

A few words: ☺

Math vocabulary words should be used and discussed as they come up naturally in the conversations that take place during problem-solving. It should not be the focus but it does deserve attention. It is difficult to process and discuss concepts for which you have no language. Therefore, as much discussion should take place as possible so students are immersed in the language. It is helpful to have a picture or example next to the word if you display a word wall.

In addition, for both teacher and students, it is very important to be very precise with the language during discussions (Mathematical Practice Standard 7 – Attend to precision.) For example, when discussing fractions on a ruler, it is important for students to realize that marks on the ruler are lengths or line distances; therefore when discussing measurement, it will be important when students to describe the length is for example, 48 *inches* (being clear it is a line they are referring to), ...or the area of the room is 225 *square* feet. Once words come up and are discussed, it should be expected for students to use these words when explaining.